
Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) FY15 Frequently Asked Questions

Transportation Services

1. Do the administrative cap rules apply to the transportation budget? Can the ISD retain 2% for administration?

There will be two budgets in the FY15 Implementation Plan: a transportation budget and a slot allocation budget. Transportation costs that exceed the transportation allocation can be reported in the slot allocation budget.

The ISD may choose to retain up to 2% of the transportation allocation for administrative services directly related to transportation services and this amount is calculated separately from the 2% maximum allowed for administrative services in the slot allocation budget.

2. Can we approve transportation expenses for field trips in the transportation budget?

No; field trip costs can be entered into the slot allocation budget.

3. Must a program transport both to-and-from school to utilize transportation funds?

No, but remember that the intent of legislation is to meet family need for transportation. In recent years, as part of reduced local share, GSRP programs have reduced transportation services. Consider that this new transportation allocation may be able to reinstate full transportation services and relieve transportation burden on families.

4. Can an ISD use the transportation allocation to reimburse parents for transportation, pay for taxi or other public transport service?

The transportation allocation is designed to reimburse a program for its plan of transportation services for children to-and-from GSRP. Department of Human Services Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing transportation provisions must be

adhered to. These funds are not intended to reimburse parents for exceptional situations such as fuel for personal vehicles or reimbursement for taxis or other public transportation.

5. How do we cost allocate based on children on a public school bus?

Review how many children are being transported, consider how many of those children are enrolled into GSRP use that data to help determine the fair proportion of cost to attribute to GSRP. Remember that as part of fiscal monitoring, the ISD should be able to defend anything that is put into the budget with documentation.

Eligibility and Enrollment

1. Can a bordering ISD refuse to release funds to a neighboring ISD?

This answer to this is explicit in legislation. All Head Start eligible children are referred to Head Start. Upon parent request, the residing ISD must release the child eligible for GSRP to another ISD.

ISDs implement a written agreement regarding transfers. The receiving ISD implements its prioritization process regarding applications and child enrollment. The residing ISD transfers the slot allocation and the accompanying transportation allocation to the receiving ISD. The residing ISD retains credit for the slot being filled.

2. What if a resident family applies and wants to attend a neighboring ISD later in the year, after I have all of my slots filled.....where does that transfer slot come from?

As with each year's enrollment, the ISD monitors filled slots. This year, ISDs will also keep track of accepted transfers (transferring in) and released transfers (transferring out). Now that FY15 final allocations have been announced, programs can begin enrolling families into the program by quintiles/risk factors and so plans for across ISD transfers should be occurring now, as well. Each ISD must establish a policy and procedures as to how transfers will be handled and ensure that all staff involved in enrollment are trained.

When an ISD has full child-enrollment of all slots, the ISD can document that it has no slots to release (no funding left to pay for) a child attending GSRP in another ISD. This is the only instance when an ISD may not complete a parent's transfer request.

3. Are there implications for preschool program options?

The receiving ISD can use the per-slot allocation to implement Part-Day GSRP, School-Day GSRP or the GSRP/Head Start Blend (where the Head Start grantee's catchment area overlaps ISD boundaries). When the per-slot transfer becomes part of an enrollment in a School-Day program, the ISDs must recognize and implement the use of two slots for that child, unless utilizing the GSRP/Head Start Blend.

4. Can the resident and receiving ISDs have an agreement that families may enroll across ISD lines without transfer of funds... OR that the resident ISD can offer the per-slot amount which the receiving ISD may choose to waive or decline?

No. Section 32(d) (12) makes clear that a family may choose to participate in an out-of-residence ISD GSRP and that the residing ISD must pay the respective per-slot amount to the receiving ISD.

5. I am concerned about financially viable classrooms. How does an ISD decide which subrecipient to take a slot from?

The ISD may locally determine a process that is as reasonable and fair to subrecipients as possible. Considerations include viability of classrooms, whether or not the district of residence includes multiple subrecipients and meeting the priority of CBO partnership.

6. Can an ISD 'hold' slots in anticipation of parent-request to participate in a neighboring ISD program?

Some ISDs 'hold' a few slots to meet the need of late enrolling, resident families and so it would be approvable to 'hold' distribution of a few slots in anticipation of transfer requests, though in this first year of implementing legislated cross-ISD enrollment, it may be difficult to estimate how many slots to 'hold.' Important considerations are resident, unserved children on wait-lists, and slots which may remain unfilled and result in recovered funds.

7. How should we address out-of-ISD requests for GSRP service when federal poverty levels may be different for each family?

Align and implement local policies for enrolling resident and accepting out-of-ISD children. Please refer to earlier guidance titled "FY15 GSRP Eligibility and Enrollment."

8. Is there a difference between giving away slots and filling up slots?

Yes. A residing ISD must release a child, per parent request, for enrollment if it has an unfilled slot. The residing ISD may only refuse a parent request when all of the ISD's slots have been filled. A receiving ISD that does not have space to accommodate a child does not have to accept a transfer enrollment. A receiving ISD must have space in a GSRP classroom to accept a family transferring in from a neighboring ISD.

At this point, all slots should be distributed to subrecipients, but classrooms are likely not filled anywhere unless they are filled with children at the lowest quintile.

9. What are the implications for children with special needs?

Please review the local ISD agreements about special education services for features to replicate or align with the new GSRP policy to enroll non-resident children into GSRP.

Enrolling families over 250%

1. Please discuss the service to 10% of over-income families.

No more than 10% of enrolled children may be from families above 250% FPL.

New Exception: For ISDs that can successfully demonstrate to MDE that children from families at or below 250% FPL are served, legislation 'raised the bar' on the definition of over-income, allowing ISDs to expand enrollment to children from families at or below 300% FPL. In this instance, ISDs may fill 10% of slots with families above 300% FPL.

The sliding fee scale requirements have not changed; any family over 250% FPL must pay tuition.